

The Defender

THE VOICE OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

JUUL and other vapes: the safer cigarette?

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Top administrator abruptly resigns

By Elisabeth O'Donnell
Executive Editor

In an unexpected shift, the vice president of the office of institutional advancement, Richard Daniel, resigned on Oct. 9. The VP of institutional advancement (IA) leads the offices of annual giving, individual giving, alumni and family relations, foundation relations and sponsored programs, advancement services, and as of recently career services, all residing together in Prevel Hall and the Pomerleau Alumni Center across the street from Jeanmarie Hall.

Daniel's resignation came as a surprise to the IA staff. Jerry Flanagan, who has worked with the college for nearly 45 years, will take the position in an interim arrangement.

Daniel interviewed for a presidential position at Eastern Arizona College on Sept. 29, according to the Eastern Arizona Courier. It is unclear whether or not Daniel's trip to Arizona influenced his resignation. Attempts to reach Daniel were unsuccessful and President John J. Neuhauser did not comment on the information.

By mid-March each year, the college exhausts the money students pay for tuition and housing. The rest of the fiscal year (ending on June 30) is supported through funds raised by IA. The office strives to develop lifelong relationships with alumni, parents, and friends of the college, hoping to engage them as volunteers and benefactors, according to the office's mission statement. Last year, the office raised \$3.39 million. This year IA's revenue goal is \$3.35 million, 1.88 million of which they hope to designate to the Highest Priority Fund, which is directed to wherever the college needs it most (typically financial aid and scholarships).

As the Defender noted in September, the college continues to face significant financial challenges due to the drop in incoming class size, and a \$1.5 million deficit as of 2016. As tuition from students decreases, the college relies on the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends of the college, all of which support the college through the office of IA.

Daniel began as VP in August 2016 and implemented numerous fundraising and recruitment projects to keep the financial state of the college afloat.

SEE **RESIGNATION** pg 5

Alum's memoir adapted for Netflix

By Jack Martin
International Editor

When she was seven, Loung Ung and her family were fleeing their home in the capital city of Cambodia, laden with the few possessions they could carry, trying to escape the grasp of the rogue communists who were rampaging and killing. For five years, Ung worked in labor camps training as a child soldier. 35 years later, she and Angelina Jolie have brought her story to the screen.

Since her graduation from St. Michael's in 1996, Ung has become one of the college's most celebrated alumni. She began writing her memoir *First They Killed My Father* while she was a student. It has just been turned into a Netflix original movie, co-written

by Ung and Jolie who also directed the film. The film was selected as the Cambodian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the upcoming 90th Academy Awards.

In a conversation over the phone, Ung reflected on her story, the process of turning her book into a movie, and how she reacted to seeing her story on screen.

Q: What was life like in Cambodia for you as a child before the invasion of the Khmer Rouge?

I was born in a Cambodia that was very vibrant with colors and beauty and architecture and a civilization that built the largest religious complex in the world the Angkor Wat.

SEE **NETFLIX** pg 16



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUNG UNG

Loung Ung '93 published her memoir *First They Killed My Father* in 2000.

Campus struggles with guest policy change



ILLUSTRATION BY JACK CARON

By Corinne Duffy
Social Media & Opinion Editor

"Hey can you tell me what direction the threes are in?" a visitor asked Doug Babcock, director of public safety, on the first Saturday of the fall semester. On their walk to the 300s townhouses, Babcock asked the guest several questions, and the guest refused to answer. "You can tell me your friend's name, or you can start walking that way to Route 15," Babcock told the guest.

With the combination of fights that broke out on Derby Day last May and the ongoing presence of outsiders on campus on the weekends, Residence Life and Public Safety at St. Michael's college have been taking strides to enforce the guest policy on campus.

"There are guests that come that aren't affiliated with anyone," said Jeff Vincent, coordinator of community standards & student conduct and assistant dean of students. "They're just showing up here and hanging out

trying to find something social to do on campus."

By contrast, there is the guest that is invited to the campus by a student. "We register guests, and we welcome people to the community that have respect and a tie," said Babcock. Students are held accountable for

anything a guest does while visiting.

"Most of the incidents that I have dealt with this semester in the townhouse areas have been with non-students," said Samantha Prue, '18, a resident assistant of the 200s townhouses. "It's so easy to tell when people aren't St. Mike's students by their behavior."

Babcock has contacts at UVM, Champlain, and Norwich. When there is a student from any of those schools causing trouble on St. Michael's campus, those contacts are notified, and then those contacts discipline those students as they see fit.

Derby Day Disaster

"Part of the reason we're focused on it this year is because Derby Day last year was a disaster," Babcock said. "Eight different people that we had to throw off campus for fighting, aggressive behavior, were not students." Derby Day is an event that occurs on campus on the same day as the Kentucky Derby.

"We were getting stuff thrown at us, and it was going south," Babcock said. That was when they realized they needed to send a message.

Eight police cars were lined up across the 300s field, two of them public safety vehicles, and the other six police vehicles from four neighboring towns. The entire Public Safety staff was present, including Babcock himself.

The cars all lined up at the edge of the 3's field with their lights on. All the officers got out of their vehicles and stood there for about two minutes, then began a slow, measured walk toward the townhouses. Once the officers were close enough to students, they began to yell, "Go home, party's over, get out of here."

"We were very intentional about how we did it because we needed a very strong message to be sent," Babcock said.

"What we did by doing that was give everybody who really didn't want to get wrapped up in this plenty of time to get out of there. We didn't chase anybody, we didn't cover the exits, we didn't surround, we didn't corner people, we set it up so that everybody could just go home." Babcock said this gave students the opportunity to leave without getting in trouble.

"It's a privilege to have a guest here," Vincent said. "We want [students] to relay to their guest how important it is, like you know, 'this is my home, please treat it like my home,'" Vincent said. He said this year he strives to have students be more aware of the policy, which can be found on the school website, and how their guests are behaving while visiting the campus. ●

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New leadership appointed to Center for Women and Gender

By Phoebe Laidley-Collias
Staff Writer

Following the layoff of Micalee Sullivan, former director of the Center for Women and Gender, the school has appointed new staff to work at the Center. In addition to Gabby Elmoussaoui, a current graduate student at the college and current coordinator of the CWG, the school has also brought Kelsy HenneBarrows from the Bergeron Wellness Center to assist in running the CWG and to collaborate on projects with Elmoussaoui.

Vice President of Student Affairs Dawn Ellinwood said the decision to let Sullivan go was purely a financial decision. The school budget could not afford to continue to pay Sullivan's salary. "Micalee wasn't replaced," Ellenwood said. "Gabby was hired through the CMAS [Center for Multicultural Affairs and Services] as a graduate coordina-

tor for CMAS." This was decided after Sullivan's leave. The school wanted the CWG to remain open for structure and support for the school. Elmoussaoui's job is to oversee the clubs and events that meet in the CWG.

HenneBarrows is finishing her psychology degree by working at the Bergeron Wellness Center and will be aiding Elmoussaoui with programs. On Monday evening, HenneBarrows and Elmoussaoui hosted a "Tea and Talk" session in the CWG that was open to the St. Michael's community. Although the turnout was small, there was no lack of conversation.

"It has been not easy with the sudden departure of Micalee," HenneBarrows said. "Nor was the transition of the CWG. There is still shock from the students." Both HenneBarrows and Elmoussaoui are aware of how much the Center meant to students when Sullivan was there. They said they wish to continue to keep the CWG running

for the St. Michael's community with all that was offered when Sullivan was there.

During the "Tea and Talk," the group discussed ideas about how to grow the CWG's programming and outreach. The guests vocalized their concern about hours of operation, asking for better hours and a more set schedule.

Common Ground President Deirdre McPhee '18 said outreach has already been established between the club and the Center. "We are very excited to be working with both of them and are looking forward to collaborating," she wrote in an email interview. "Gabby has done a fantastic job of reaching out to me and asking what more the CWG could be doing for St. Mike's LGBTQIA+ students."

Amidst the changes this semester, the Center remains open with the new management and its future appears strong. ●



PHOTO BY MATT DOYLE
Kelsy HenneBarrows is the new assistant for the Center for Women and Gender.

Upgrades to local mountains have students less STOWE-ked

By Matthew Pramas
Staff Writer

Changes made to Stowe Mountain Resort over the past year, along with increasing competition from other mountains, led to a decline in the number of St. Michael's students who purchase passes to ski at Stowe this upcoming season.

Vail Resorts acquired Stowe Mountain Resort in a \$50 million acquisition in February.

The new ownership has caused many skiers at St. Michael's to look for alternative destinations, such as Sugarbush Resort, Smugglers Notch, Bolton Valley and Jay Peak.

"The Stowe representative at our school sold far less passes than in years past," said Ski and Snowboard Club President Patrick Morrissey '18. The shift in interest this year stems in part from fears of what might result from the new Vail ownership. Many resorts in the area have been able to upgrade their mountain operations, with no negative impacts for their visitors.

"The biggest thing has just been the increasing competition from other resorts. Sugarbush as well as Jay Peak has been renovating and putting a lot of money into their mountains' facilities and the price of passes has actually decreased recently," Morrissey said.

Beyond the college rate at Stowe, unchanged at \$375 and \$400, depending on the date of purchase, riders who prefer park-style are also more attracted to places like Sugarbush with

higher quality terrain parks. While the rate for a college pass at Stowe has not increased, Vail has incorporated ten blackout dates this season, which prohibit pass holders from skiing on certain popular dates to keep crowds smaller for higher paying customers. These include days during winter break and some high-traffic weekends. While some skiers are not unsettled by these restrictions, Sean Flynn, '20, said that "I normally wouldn't ever get [a pass with] blackout dates." Flynn prefers to avoid blackout dates by skiing at Sugarbush because he likes the freedom to ski whenever he pleases during the season.

Aside from the financial aspect of buying a Stowe pass, riders who prefer freestyle skiing, known as park skiing, are more likely to go to places like Sugarbush because of their higher end park features. Whereas riders who are more attracted to "all mountain" style skiing tend to go to Stowe.

"Freestyle skiing is better at Sugarbush without a doubt," said Flynn.

Since many students consider themselves to be park skiers at St. Michael's, people are moving away from Stowe. This has created a dichotomy within the skiing community here, said Morrissey. "For those who are trying to access high speed quads or park terrain, Smugglers' Notch doesn't really offer that," Morrissey said.

Smugglers' Notch is considered the home mountain of St. Michael's because of the \$65 pass that is offered to students. However, their lack of terrain park features has also caused students

to go elsewhere.

Morrissey said that price is relative, depending on what a skier is looking for in a mountain, but he feels that the facilities in general at Stowe are better. "Stowe just overall has really great terrain, and you can hike so many different lines because you can drop into the notch road...the notch road runs in between Smugglers Notch, and Stowe," said Drew Beckwith '18.

One of the most significant changes Vail has brought to Stowe affects students in a less direct way. As an owner of many popular skiing destinations, Vail has included Stowe in its Epic Pass consortium where holders of this pass can access all of their mountains, including Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, and Keystone all in Colorado as well as others in the United States, Canada, and Australia, according to Vail's company profile webpage. The Epic Pass is around \$800 while the old Stowe season pass cost about \$2,200, according to Morrissey. This means that more locals who previously did not spring for the Stowe Pass may do so this season. The speculation has kept students away from a mountain that already holds a reputation for long lines and crowded trails.

"For the general population, the Epic Pass is really competitive with Sugarbush, Smuggs, and Jay Peak for the local areas, but for college students it just means more crowds at the mountain," Morrissey said.

Another concern among students is the implementation of "yellow jackets". These are employees who are de-

ployed onto the mountain to monitor safety, and stop anyone who is deemed to be skiing too fast. Skiing in the east is known for their long, fast groomers when the conditions are bad. So now that type of skiing will be limited. East coast skiers will naturally be disgruntled. ●



PHOTO BY MATTHEW FOURNARIS
Drew Beckwith, '18, sits in his townhouse between his pairs of Blizzard, and Armada skis.



ILLUSTRATION BY ISABELLA CIGNA

Classics major and minor buried, Latin major born

By Isabella Cigna
Staff Writer

In the midst of the college's recent financial difficulties, the St. Michael's Board of Trustees voted to discontinue the classics major, the classics minor, and the Italian studies minor said Registrar David Barrowclough. To maintain a large part of the classics department, the Board of Trustees approved the Latin major and minor as an adjustment to the classics major and minor, phasing out Greek.

The class of 2017 has three students in the classics major, three in the classics minor, and one in the Italian studies minor, Barrowclough said.

The board also approved an education studies minor, and American studies minor. "If the college had unlimited financial resources and unlimited interest by the students to take a wide variety of courses, it would be hard to argue that we shouldn't offer Greek," Barrowclough explained. "But in this current climate, and based on what our students are interested in, hiring a new Greek instructor is perhaps not the best

use of resources."

"At first, of course I felt upset, but I hope it's just temporary," said Ziteng Yang '20, philosophy and classics double major. "How can you divide these two, Latin and Greek, apart?" The classics major involves a full year of Greek and a full year of Latin, then four more reading courses in either language.

If a major or minor is discontinued while a student is still enrolled in it, the Registrar "works on a case-by-case basis with the student and faculty to find a pathway to complete that major or minor," Barrowclough said.

Yang said he sees immense value in studying the classics, but that "[the decision] is quite rational and correct. It's practical." He continued, "[The college] makes their decisions depending on the students and what kind of areas or classes they want to study."

Barrowclough explained that the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC) reviewed all majors and minors last year, considering criteria such as the number of recent graduates, enrollment in the program's courses, retirement of faculty, and how

the program generally fit in with the college.

"Through a series of open meetings, a final list of majors and minors to potentially discontinue was voted on by the Faculty Assembly," Barrowclough said. The final vote was from the Board of Trustees.

"The decision was with sadness and regret, but this is what we think makes most sense," said Professor Ronald Begley, chair of the classics department. He explained that the upcoming retirement of Professor Conley was a major factor leading to the decision to discontinue classics, and add the Latin major.

"It's just not feasible for the college to replace him," Begley said. "The college has had to make hard decisions... they're just trying to make the best of it." Begley stressed how supportive administrators have been throughout the process.

"This is a new chapter, but I just hope that sometime in the future, maybe a new set of circumstances would create an opening for people to be able to study Greek as well," Begley said.

He said that an independent study and/or classes at the University of Vermont would be available for students who still wish to study Greek. Yang said he plans to explore these options.

The college's catalog 60 years ago had 13 different majors, all of which still exist in some form, Barrowclough said. Today, there are a total of 36 majors.

Minors that have been eliminated in the past include Russian, which ended in 2006, as well as international business, finance, management, marketing, and information systems, all of which ended in 2010.

The physical science major was discontinued in 2009, but other than that, Barrowclough said, "we have been far more likely to evolve majors or add majors than to discontinue majors."

The new Latin major is an example of this. "It might be small, or just a few people, but it's still very important," said Yang of the new major. ●

A taste of the world in one mile

By Matthew Fournaris
Multimedia Editor

Burlington is not the first place that comes to mind when thinking of a diverse city. However, when it comes to food, Burlington's Old North End has no shortage of diversity.

This short film follows Jameson Connor, '18, as he explores and learns about the North End's local international food scene. Connor makes his way along North Street stopping at the Nepali Dumpling House, Brixton Halal, Shinjuku Village, and the Mawuhi market.

Go to www.defender.smcvt.edu to watch.



RESIGNATION
CONTINUED FROM A1

He enacted the merger between the career development and alumni relations offices, forming the Career Education and Alumni Engagement Center (CEAEC). This program directs its relationships with alumni to benefit students' budding careers. In joining the two offices, alumni can offer advice, internships, and training to students aspiring to their field. The office hopes that this program will pique the interest of prospective students as well.

According to Jen Conetta, director of annual giving, Daniel focused on bringing new technology to the office, freeing up the very tight staff to expand to other tasks. For example, Daniel was instrumental in transforming the office's phonathon from a paper to an automated system, catching the office up to the methods used by larger universities. This upgrade eliminated multiple tedious tasks which the staff had to complete to process donations from alumni and professionalized the phonathon job, making it more beneficial for the student staff.

"Richard was a really great leader. We had been fairly siloed and while everyone was really doing their job, and doing their job well, I think he taught our team to step out of our job descriptions and realize where we could help colleagues and colleagues could help us," Conetta said. "I also think he was really great at building relationships around campus, where we had been hidden across the street. He was invested in us. I think to him his job was very much a lifestyle, so I think that he lived this."

Conetta also said that while Daniel's resignation was sudden, the office will be moving forward in the coming

months due to the positive changes made in his time at the college, and also due to Flanagan stepping up as interim VP.

After graduating from St. Michael's in 1971, Flanagan returned in 1973 working as an assistant dean and was later appointed director of admissions which he maintained for 30 years. He began work in institutional advancement in 2013, and "officially retired"

I am. It's faith, family, and St. Michael's and in that order."

President Neuhauser has worked with Flanagan throughout the entirety of his time at the college, and is unconcerned about the progress of the office in the coming months. "Richard Daniel was new to the position, so in a sense Jerry has much more, long standing relationships with alumni and donors than Richard would have had. So in

longer than a year, Neuhauser said.

While the institutional advancement may be hidden from main campus, their work is present throughout, covering the costs that tuition alone cannot. "We need to engage alumni and families to help us on the career side and to give back. We need to increase participation and bring in more dollars. These are all things we can do once we are fully staffed, and I think Richard brought lots of new blood and new ideas. It did shake things up in a good way that he was here and he brought bigger university experience that we can adapt," Conetta said.

President Neuhauser still has his eyes set on the importance of tuition revenue. "[VP of IA] is obviously an important position because we get a considerable amount of funding which mainly goes for scholarships and things, but it pales by comparison to the importance of admissions," he said. As this year's first year incoming class size was 10 percent smaller than last year's—therefore, 10 percent less revenue from tuition.

"We talk about being this tight knit family and it's our job to continue that after people graduate. So I think the most difficult thing [for us] is empowering everyone to do their part to make our community work. Everyone has to take ownership over their piece of it and realize that that's what makes St. Mike's special," Conetta said.

"We have some challenges. But the only way we are going to overcome those challenges is to work together toward the goal of making St. Michael's the best place we can, so that years from now when you're looking for jobs they'll say, 'She's a St. Michael's grad—that's a great place,'" Flanagan said. ●

"I'm not trying to make huge decisions, I'm just trying to keep us steady but moving forward."

—Jerry Flanagan, interim vice president of institutional advancement

in December 2016. While he was no longer employed by the school at this time, he still maintained a desk in IA as a volunteer, coming into the office a few times a week to help with what he could and maintain many of the close alumni relationships he had fostered over the decades.

Upon learning of Daniel's resignation, many members of the office vouched to invite Jerry to act as interim since he knew the office so well and worked closely with Richard, Conetta said.

"I'm not coming back to work full time, and I wouldn't take this position anywhere else but St. Michael's College. But, I said if I can help in this transition period I'd be happy to do it and the staff seemed pretty excited about it, and my wife agreed with a couple of caveats, such as still spending time in Florida," Flanagan said.

The college has been Flanagan's life for over 50 years. "It's just part of who

some sense I think Jerry could do just fine in this position. He's probably admitted 80 percent of all the alumni out there."

"I worked with Richard and liked him. I was excited when he came. For me at this point I'm still gathering information on new things such as the CEAEC. I'm not trying to make huge decisions, I'm just trying to keep us steady but moving forward and I think things were moving a pretty good direction," Flanagan said.

Flanagan originally agreed to hold the position for three months, but is aware that the permanent position could remain open for as long as a year. An active search for a permanent VP will not commence until a new president takes office, according to President Neuhauser. If the eventual search took longer than Flanagan would like, the college would again bring on another interim with experience, perhaps another alumnus for no

The conspiracy of the Kennedy files

By Nathan Crammond
Staff Writer

On Oct. 26, Americans received word that President Donald Trump announced he would be declassifying the "Kennedy Files," the long-restricted documents of the FBI and CIA on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963.

The "Kennedy Files" are the files which contain information from the investigation of the intelligence agencies regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which the government has kept from the public up until now. After the initial announcement, the release of the documents has since been postponed by President Trump on request from the FBI and CIA until April 26, 2018 for the purposes of verifying that none of the documents being released contain any information which could result in the compromise of national security, law enforcement or intelligence gathering methods.

"Kennedy's assassination is fol-

lowed by the assassinations of other prominent figures: Malcolm X, in 1965, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, in 1968," said Douglas Slaybaugh, professor of history. This is particularly relevant in that it leads to a culture of mistrust of government by the American people. "There's going to be the credibility gap Lyndon Johnson creates by lying about what the U.S. is doing in Vietnam. Richard Nixon will have another credibility gap related to both his Vietnam policy but also his Watergate cover up."

The release of the files also brings up the question of the role of the government in restricting data as opposed to the right of the public to access information in a free society. "There is information that the CIA may acquire that should not be disseminated with the public," said John Hughes, professor of political science. "They may be acquiring information that if were divulged, would expose their methods, how they acquire data, expose people who work for them, and put people's lives at risk." ●



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JACK CARON



PHOTO COURTESY MARK TARNACKI

Mary Beth Doyle, second from right, instructs her students in the MakerSpace located in Dion Student Center.



PHOTO COURTESY MARK TARNACKI

Students teach St. Michael's trustee Joseph Garrity, right, on how to make a car.

Students make little cars for children in need

By Elizabeth Stapleton
Staff Writer

What happens when a biology professor and an education professor decide to build a car?

Earlier this year, fueled by a passion for building low cost alternatives to power-wheelchairs for young children with disabilities, professors Mary Beth Doyle and Donna Bozzone found themselves learning and practicing how to make adaptations on child sized cars.

The project began in June when the two professors were approached by a physical therapist on behalf of a local family who had requested a car for their five-year-old daughter Katie.

Katie has muscular dystrophy and walking down to the playground to participate in recess was too much for her body. Crafting a battery-powered car to fit Katie's size and condition has made the process much easier for Katie to enjoy recess with her fellow classmates.

Doyle and Bozzone recruited students from their classes who were interested in the project. Doyle explained that it allowed the students to use their hands and gave them an opportunity to do things creatively without worry of failure.

"We are not electricians by any means" said Annie Ledue, '21, "but we were just kind of handed screw drivers."

Since the project was all voluntary, both Doyle and Bozzone held no expectation that the students would have expert experience in robotics. Students had to learn the basic conceptual skills on an older car before they were allowed to create a car that a child could use.

"From a teaching standpoint, it was a perfect

lesson to do something and not always have it go smoothly, and that's more than okay" Bozzone said.

It took all of July and most of August this past summer to get the car into rideable condition. They had to make sure the car would fit Katie's needs.

Katie wears foot braces, known as ankle foot orthosis, which prevents her foot from being able to reach the pedals. Because of this, the class rewired the acceleration to the steering wheel, making it a feather-touch switch and more easily accessible.

The car's original plastic wheels created too much

"One of the things I love the most about St. Mike's is our tradition of service. It's baked into the college"

-Donna Bozzone, professor of biology

noise on the indoor floors, so it was not expected for Katie to use the car inside the school.

"One of the best parts is the students also get to see us not having an answer right away," Doyle said.

The class tried a couple of things, she said, but they finally went to a bike shop and picked up old tires to wrap around the plastic wheels. The car was completed in September.

Through their involvement on this car, students

learned how to use the power tools, how electrical systems work and ways to interrupt those systems, soldering, physical modifications, creative problem solving, and collaboration.

The outcome resulted in major success considering they already have another car for a child who qualifies in the making.

"It's so satisfying to see, and it broadens your worldview," Sarah Hunzeker, '21, said. "It makes you further appreciate what you have because these kids don't have the same means to get around."

"One of the things I love the most about St. Mike's is our tradition of service," Bozzone said. "It's baked into the college... this project fulfills a totally different avenue to feed that impulse."

According to Doyle, the goal is to be able to help any "little one" in Vermont by having three brand new cars being worked on at any-given-time per semester. The group worked on the cars on site in the Makerspace but they anticipate outgrowing the area and are hoping to find additional space.

Pursuing this line of service is something Doyle and Bozzone want to keep expanding and empowering students to join in on continuing to make huge impacts on children who need it.

Their goals include - building a center equipped with appropriate tools, modification materials, and cars, the designing of an inter-disciplinary curriculum to support Saint Michael's students in various majors, and expand their tradition of community engaged learning into a new arena.

"We really hope to get something so established and functional that it continues long after we're gone," Bozzone said. ●

International students miss their country's holidays

By Nick (Sixiang) Chen
Staff Writer

Three international students reminisce their home country's traditional festivals and explain the ways in which they celebrate their favorite holiday on campus.

Mpho Maama '20 is originally from Lesotho, South Africa and lived the majority of his life in Switzerland. The holiday he misses the most is the South African Christmas. South Africa is in the Southern Hemisphere therefore the holiday is celebrated in the summer.

"During Christmas, our neighbors and extended families always gather together and have a big meal as a community," Maama said. "We always serve some traditional food and do some Brai [BBQ], some chakalaka [vegetable relish], Pap [an African and Caribbean porridge made from Maize Meal] and many others."

Unlike Christmas in other countries, Christmas in South Africa is more like a traditional festival and does not have a religious relation. He said: "The date is more traditional and is not considered to be the actual birth date of Jesus Christ. It's just a day where we appreciate our elders, families, and our community members."

On campus, Maama does not celebrate Christmas the way he celebrated at home. However, he usually gathers with his friends and plays music from all over the world and dances all night. He believes it is a good compromise and he makes the best of the holiday while being in the United States.

"It's good not to lose a sense of your culture, roots, and where you're from," Maama said.

Zichen "Chuck" Qian '20 was born and raised in Shanghai, China. The traditional festival he misses most is the Spring Festival — Chinese New Year.

Different from New Year's Day, the Spring Festival is celebrated at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar it happens around February. Traditionally, Spring Festival is a time to honor deities as well as ancestors.

"During the Spring Festival, we will set off firecrackers, driving 'nian' beast way. We also stick the 'reversed Fu' and hang some couplets on the front door," Qian said. In Chinese the "reversed Fu" is homophonic with "Fu comes", both being pronounced as "Fu Dao Le," which means good fortune.

During the Spring Festival, people will go home to gather with families no matter how busy they are. "I only spend the Spring Festival with my family. Even if I want to spend it with my friends, it's not realistic," Qian said.

Qian, has now lived in the United States for two years. For Qian, it is difficult because his family does not live in the United States. This makes it more challenging to celebrate Chinese New Year, he decided that he will have a small celebration with friends on campus and have a meal together. At the same time, he will communicate with his family on the Internet.

Deborah-Julie Katsuva '18, of the Democratic Republic of Congo has lived in the United States for five years. Her most memorable traditional festi-

val is the Independence Day (June 30) in her country, which is celebrated to commemorate the country's liberation from Belgium in 1960.

"It's important to me it is a celebration that allows me to rethink the

tions would be high," said Kimoi Seale, the assistant director in the Center for Multicultural Affairs and Services.

In order to celebrate the traditional festivals of international students, Center for Multicultural Affairs and

"It's good not to lose a sense of your culture, roots, and where you're from."

-Mpho Maama '20, South African student

history of my country and how far we have come." Katsuva said, "[Also] it's important because it is an occasion for us to get together."

"At the moment there is a large Chinese population so it is expected that the desire to have Chinese celebra-

Services hopes to foster more events for international students. "We recognize it's not the same as their experience at home, but we hope to get as close to it as we can," Seale said. ●



PHOTO BY EVA WILTON

Mpho Maama, '20 is originally from South Africa and has lived the majority of his life in Switzerland. He celebrates his favorite holiday, South African Christmas while living on campus by spending time with friends.

Doggie P-Day: Fundraiser for a bigger cause

By Matthew Doyle
Contributing Writer

Dogs hounded the 300s field with tails wagging on Nov. 4 at the Doggie P-Day event to bring aware-

ness to dogs who do not have homes. The one-time fundraiser event was held by students in a marketing course with professor Marie-France Nelson. "We wanted a name students could relate to so, it turned into Doggie P-Day," said Emily Tarr, one of the organizers of the event.

Approximately 80 students showed up to interact with about 20 dogs, from mutts to huskies and even a rottweiler. Participants were encouraged to bring their own dogs who live on campus to join the doggie talent show, kissing booth, and doggie speed dating event.

All Breed Rescue, a shelter in Williston, Vermont, brought one of their dogs "August", a 5-month-old Beagle/Boxer mixed puppy, to campus for the event. in hopes that someone would adopt him. Unfortunately, August is still looking for a loving owner. Doggie P-Day event was a success for the marketing students and people enjoyed interacting with the dogs. ●



Daniel Jay du Feu '18, pets his dog at the fundraiser event, Doggie P-Day on Nov. 4.



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW DOYLE

Top: Emily Tarr '18, one of the co-hosting members interacts with a dog. **Bottom:** August, the 5-month-old puppy from All Breed Rescue was at the fundraiser event in hopes of finding an owner who would adopt him.

Conservatives re-evaluate the political bubble

By Eva Wilton

Photography & Politics Editor

Last April, three students formed the SMC Conservative Group, and they held their first event Oct. 18 to encourage educated civil discourse on current political issues. The founding members said they have been challenged by their conservative stance at a predominantly liberal campus and especially post Trump's inauguration.

"Our aim is to bring conversation to campus."

-Alec Medine, co-chair member of SMC Conservatives Group

"Our aim is to bring conversation to campus. Politics are getting more aimed around identity and are deeply personal," said Alec Medine '18, one of the founding members.

"In classes, I have noticed subtle statements come out during discussions from students that tend to bait conservatives," Medine said, adding that inside and outside of the class-

room conservatives on campus have felt uncomfortable at times.

"Conservatives in general walk onto a college campus expecting someone to not agree with them," said Ralph Coluntino '18 one of the chair member of the group.

The college's location in the Northeast and recruitment of students from this region means that the student demographic is predominantly left leaning. "A part of the affiliation (left or

separation on campus.

"I'm sure for a lot of people here that hold conservative ideology being challenged on a day to day basis will help them grow more deeply into their beliefs, and do more introspection on why they believe what they believe," Ryan Wurmsdobler '19 said.

On Oct. 18 the SMC Conservative Group hosted a panel discussion to discuss national current events. The three founding members served as panelists and discussed economic prospects for college students, health care, the American Dream today, and whether the United States should pursue international isolation. A question and answer session followed the panel discussion. Approximately 30 students and faculty attended, from a wide range of political backgrounds.



PHOTO BY EVA WILTON

Ryan Wurmsdobler '19, a founding member of the SMC Conservatives Group, spoke at the SMC Conservatives panel discussion on Oct. 18 about the political climate in the United States.

"This is the first step (the panel discussion) in which we hope to be a long road to civil discourse on campus," Wurmsdobler said. ●

International food festival celebrates diversity

By Madeline Clark

Staff Writer

The smell of samosas mingled with those of empanadas and quiches while the beating of African drums echoed around the gymnasium. Around 500 students, faculty, and community members from approximately 30 different countries mingled during the 14th annual St. Michael's College International Festival. During a time of heightened racial tensions in the United States, it held a greater significance than in years past, according to the assistant director of the office of multicultural affairs and services, Kimoi Seale.

"Things happened last year that weren't truly representative of the community we have here," said Seale, referencing several bias incidents on

campus last fall. The Diversity Coalition put on a "brave face" and put in hard work to put on the event and "help heal our community," he said.

The festival showcased food, and performances from musicians and dancers, inspired by the Pacific Islands, Africa, Latin America, Europe, South Asia, and East Asia. It was planned and organized by the six leaders of the Diversity Coalition, who themselves represent Japan, the Congo, Ghana, and the Dominican Republic. "I can't stress enough how much the students do, how much work they put in," Seale said.

"It's the biggest multicultural event on campus," said Bernard Achinda '18, one of the students responsible for planning the event.

"It's one of the few events on campus where you have people from

a lot of different cultures coming together enjoying each other's cultures," said director of multicultural student services, Moise St. Louise.

Minoska Castillo '20, said that music and dance bring people together, and help them understand each other better than lectures and speakers. "Everybody's mind opens up to music and food...it's easier than a talk," said Castillo, "You wouldn't think certain people would come to this." Castillo said she was pleased, after months of preparation, to look around the room at the attendees' smiling faces. "It's such a small school but we celebrate culture," she said.

Seale remarked that one particular instance of different cultures coming together occurred when some of the



college's Japanese students got up and danced with the Celtic Knights. He said it was a "testament to the power" of the event.

Melanie Castillo '18, was also in attendance. She said she had participated in the festival each of her four years at the college, running it for three of those years. "It was my first point of connection to this institution," she said. She said that it helps create a more inclusive environment on campus.

"We have so much negative...in the media, and in our country" Seale said. It's nice to have events like this on campus. ●

PHOTOS ON THE LEFT BY EVA WILTON AND TOP PHOTO BY MATTHEW DOYLE

Left: Performance occurs on the stage in Tarrant Gym on Nov. 4. **Middle:** The Diversity Coalition team members spent months organizing this event and celebrate the day together. **Top Right:** Mpho Maama holds a child while students dance.



Purple Knight challenge raises over \$65,000

By Natasha Kulick
Staff Writer

The St. Michael's College athletic department held the first Purple Knight Challenge, Oct. 11-25, among 21 varsity teams to raise \$65,946 that will help to support team expenses.

Each varsity team competed to see who could source the most donors while raising money for their individual team. The athletes first called and asked parents for help fundraising. The donations themselves were made through GiveCampus.com. The link to this website was shared across social media platforms of the athletes, St. Michael's community, alumni and friends.

The winning women's and men's teams were each promised an additional \$500 from the athletic department. The goal of the department was to reach 500 donors. The baseball team sourced 501 donors while women's soccer sourced 493 and in total, there were 2,159 donors. The money each team raised went directly to their program.

Chris Kenny the athletics director, said that the department works on an operating budget. The department covers basic travel, equipment, and

lodging for all of the teams accordingly, he said. Each budget is assessed by the equipment, travel, referees, and playing or practice costs. The cross-country team, for example, has a smaller budget than the hockey team, because they do not require rink time or equipment.

"The school cannot afford everything, which is why it is great to get support from the community," said lacrosse captain Neil Gallagher, '18. The varsity teams do need fundraising to keep athletes from paying much on their own, said Gallagher. Typically, teams are expected to fundraise for special trips, new uniforms and updated equipment. According to Gallagher, even though the lacrosse team earned \$12,375 through the Purple Knight Challenge he said, players "may still have to pay for a few things out of pocket".

Members of the ski team also have to pay out of pocket. Tristan McInnis '17, an alpine skier on the St. Michael's alpine ski team, said that Stowe increased the team's fees from \$4,000 to \$10,000. "The team could have benefited from more donations, because we pay a bit more out of pocket compared to teams we compete against like University of Vermont," McInnis said,

adding that he is grateful for all the donations the team did receive through the campaign, especially from alumni.

Each team will use their money differently. The money raised by the baseball team will go toward their trip to Florida, as part of their season training according to the coach, Jason Szafarski. "The extra \$500 will go toward new hoodies as a reward," he said. The women's soccer coach, Wendy Elles, said that the money they raised will primarily go toward getting their games live-streamed and their extra \$500 will be spent on whatever her team decides.

Kenny said, "Most of the donors were first time donors including varsity alumni from the 40's and 50's," Kenny said. This fundraiser was so successful due to the help from parents and alumni. Elles said, "We place a big emphasis on the importance of family.

We also had parents getting donors from their workplace."

In the past teams raised money through Phoneathon, a letter of appeal, or individual fundraisers. The team's social media presence contributed to the success of this campaign as they competed with each other for the most donors. Kenny said that this campaign was the most successful one yet because it raised the most money they ever have in one year, which is why they will continue to do this fundraiser for the next few years. ●



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MADDY LINDEN



TRADITIONAL / VEGETARIAN / GOURMET

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Pesto Pine Nut
Thai Peanut
Barbecue

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Extra Thin or Thick
White
Certified Organic Wheat
MED ADD .50 LG ADD .75
Gluten Free MED ONLY ADD \$3.50



PIZZA TOPPINGS

Italian Pepperoni
Hot Italian Sausage
Fresh Ground Western Beef
Cob Smoked Bacon
Marinated Chicken Breast
New England Baked Ham
Pulled Pork
Anchovy Filets
Sliced Plum Tomatoes
Freshly Cut Broccoli
Sliced White Mushrooms
Fresh Green Spinach
Sliced Red Onions
Shredded Potatoes
Sliced Green Peppers
Sliced Brussels Sprouts
Marinated Sun Dried Tomatoes

MED \$1.60 each
LG \$1.85 each

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Pepperoni® Peppers
Roasted Red Peppers
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Sweet Hawaiian Pineapple
Dried Cranberries
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Chopped Pecans
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Vegan Cheese
MED ADD \$1.00 LG ADD \$1.50
Crumbled Goat Cheese
MED ADD \$1.00 LG ADD \$1.50

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ROASTED CHICKEN BBQ

Barbecue Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Marinated Chicken Breast, Sliced Red Onions, White Mushrooms, Roasted Red Peppers with Mesquite Spices

MEAT LOVER'S REVENGE

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Honey Barbecue Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Sliced Red Onions, Extra Ground Beef, Cob Smoked Bacon, Sprinkles of Gorgonzola Cheese

LEONARDO'S WORKS

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VEGETARIAN WORKS

Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Fresh Spinach, Broccoli, White Mushrooms, Green Peppers, Red Onions, Plum Tomatoes and California Black Olives

GORGONZOLA GOURMET

Olive Oil Garlic Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Fresh Spinach, Plum Tomatoes, Marinated Artichoke Hearts with Gorgonzola Cheese

GOAT CHEESE HONEY PIE

Olive Oil Garlic Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Freshly Sliced Mushrooms, Freshly Sliced Red Onions, Thyme, Crumbled Goat Cheese with Drizzled Honey

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SIGNATURE GOURMET

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Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Peppadew® Peppers, Pulled Pork with Crumbled Goat Cheese

THAI CHICKEN

Thai Peanut Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Marinated Chicken Breast, Sliced White Mushrooms, Red Onions, Green Bell Peppers and Freshly Cut Broccoli

BASIL PESTO CHICKEN

Basil Pesto Nut Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Marinated Chicken Breast, Roasted Red Peppers, Sun Dried Tomatoes, Sliced Red Onions with Gorgonzola Cheese

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Concussions rattle campus: more than 40 cases reported

By Nathan Terry
Senior Editor

St. Michael's students are reporting a record number of concussions compared to previous years, according to Associate Dean Jonathan D'Amore. D'Amore estimates that the school will have 10-20 more reported concussions this academic year, totalling over 50 concussions by year's end.

D'Amore says that the total number of concussions reported to his office in recent days has swelled to over 40. "I think one explanation is healthcare providers are more aware in diagnosing them," D'Amore said. "Fewer than half of the students getting concussions are student athletes. The things we have seen run the gambit, from basketball games to car accidents."

Lindsay Ryan '19 has "at least" four concussions, with the first happening her freshman year of high school. "I bumped heads with someone during drama club, and I remember seeing stars," Ryan said. Ryan ac-

quired her second concussion when she accidentally hit her head against a wall during her senior year. Her third concussion occurred during a dance routine, and her most recent concussion took place on Halloween weekend when she slipped and hit her head on a table.

Ryan said her professors have been considerate to her regarding her

rugby practice. "Me and a teammate banged heads when we were going for a loose ball. I was out for two and a half weeks, and I spent a lot of time sitting in my room not doing work and avoiding physical activities."

Coughlin experienced bad headaches, loss of memory, and struggled with tasks as simple as walking his dog in the days following his concussion.

"It's scary sometimes because it doesn't always get better right away, and you don't know what the long term effects will be."

-Pat Coughlin, '18

homework. "I am getting more time for homework and projects. I still have a hard time looking at screens, and sirens and lights give me a headache."

Pat Coughlin '18 suffered his fourth concussion this past spring during a

"It's scary sometimes because it doesn't always get better right away, and you don't know what the long term effects will be," Coughlin said.

This past spring, Megan Murray '18 completed a study on the impact of

mild traumatic brain injuries on college students returning to learn. Murray said that having access to the knowledge of what a student is experiencing when they have a concussion is the key to helping students return to the classroom at the appropriate time. "If we can get all parties, the professors, the healthcare providers, and the students informed, then we can all be on the same page on how to proceed when a student is suffering from the symptoms of a concussion."

D'Amore says that with more people becoming aware of the side effects that come with concussions, the recovery process has been much easier for students who are recovering from their concussions.

"Treatments have changed. People are learning that doing some activities is ok. I think it's better to take a short term rest to get well rather than push ahead to stay current with your workload." ●

The anatomy of a concussion

By Garret Finn
Staff Writer

Renee Brault, the head athletic trainer at St. Michael's, said that concussions have been increasingly prevalent throughout her career in the field. She said that she thinks this is because more and more people know about how seriously concussions need to be taken. This year alone, she estimated that her staff has seen over 30 concussions, but does not have the exact

tally because the number increases so frequently.

A concussion is a mild form of a Traumatic Brain Injury, or TBI, and occurs when someone's head sustains an impact hard enough to move the brain in an unusual way inside the skull. Because of the complexity of the human brain, all concussions are different, and the effects vary widely based off the way that the head is impacted by the blow.

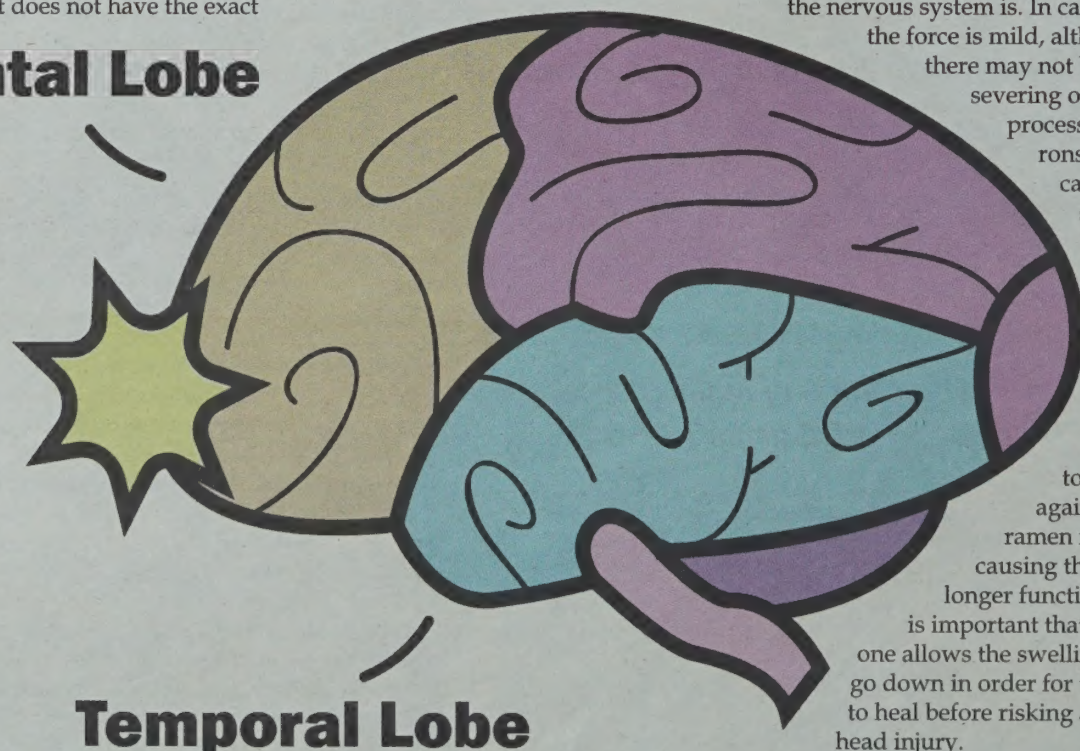
"A concussion in scientific terms is when there is some force that is exerted on the brain and neurons undergo, or are exposed to, mechanical deformation that can in severe cases lead to severing of axons of neurons, of processes that come off the neurons," said Ruth Fabian-Fine, a professor in Neuroscience at St. Michael's. She explained that that although awareness of the effects of concussions has grown, people still do not realize how fragile the nervous system is. In cases where

Suffering more than one concussion puts someone at risk of a number of diseases, including Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, or CTE which makes someone prone to depression among other emotional instabilities. It is essential to treat a concussion correctly for the brain to heal, but mismanaging the recovery can lead to a string of problems. After suffering a concussion, the best thing to do is reduce cognitive exertion, until the symptoms are gone to allow the brain to recover fully from the trauma.

A mild concussion can lead to a series of symptoms that occur directly after the blow, or in some cases take some time to set in. These symptoms may include headaches, nausea or vomiting, or a hazy feeling. More serious concussions can lead to loss of consciousness on impact, and can cause all of the symptoms listed to intensify.

For most concussions among athletes at St. Michael's, treatment includes an on average seven to ten day healing process followed by a five day return to play policy. That sometimes frustrates athletes, but Brault said she and her staff know that it's necessary to implement policies like this one to prevent lifelong damage. ●

Frontal Lobe



Temporal Lobe

the force is mild, although there may not be any severing of the processes of neurons, there can be some swelling in areas of the brain. This swelling can cause neurons to press against the foramen magnum, causing them to no longer function, so it is important that someone allows the swelling to go down in order for the area to heal before risking another head injury.

ILLUSTRATION BY LIAM RADEMACHER

The frontal and temporal lobes are the most vulnerable parts of the brain during a concussion, as they are located right next to the skull.

JUUL and other vapes: the safer choice?

As students switch from traditional cigarettes to vaporizers, experts question the health impact

By Liam Rademacher & Jack Caron

Eric Dunn '20, began his vape use in high school without having any prior tobacco addiction. Cigarettes weren't his thing, and he and his friends started to vape in their teens. Dunn owned and experimented with a variety of vaporizer brands, styles, and e-juices. His vape use continued frequently throughout high school and college, and at the end of last summer, Dunn purchased his first JUUL vape, a specific brand of vaporizer gaining traction with youth and on college campuses.

In the fall semester of 2016, St. Michael's College set forth an initiative for the campus to be completely tobacco free. The policy's purpose is "to reduce harm from tobacco use and secondhand smoke, provide an environment that encourages persons to be tobacco-free, and promote a campus culture of wellness." The detriments of smoking on an individual's health have been in the public sphere for some time now, yet nicotine addiction hasn't disappeared. Vaporizers have been cited as a safer alternative, and there has been some research to suggest that. A collaborative study between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and University College London found that subjects who vaped while continuing cigarette use had significantly higher levels of carcinogens and toxins than subjects who strictly vaped.

The study, however, does not address the health effects of nicotine itself and the level of nicotine in vaporizers. Professor Ari Kirshenbaum of the psychology department received a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct a three year study on e-cigarettes; his research centers around nicotine's effect on the brain and the psychological consequences of nicotine exposure, specifically in youth. "The wealth of scientific evidence does suggest that it's the nicotine in tobacco that makes tobacco dependency-producing," Kirshenbaum said. "Nicotine by itself does have some health ramifications; in fact, the majority of insecticides are nicotine based. It is toxic in higher doses, and even at lower doses there is a cardiac response."

There are also behavioral consequences to nicotine. Current population data shows that those who are addicted to harder drugs such as heroin and methamphetamines began cigarette use at a young age. "The evidence shows that if there were to be a 'gateway drug,' nicotine would be it. I do have some concerns; what is nicotine doing to the brain that makes people more likely to move onto these other drugs, or is it a matter of availability? People who are going to use these hard drugs have to start somewhere, and they're going to start with something that's more available, like the tobacco products."

While vaporizers come in many different shapes and functionalities across many different brands, JUUL vapes are currently rising in popularity. Its popularity arises from its discreet size, easy operation, and its higher concentration of nicotine when compared to other vapes. The vaporizer is similar in size to a USB drive, and uses a USB adapter to charge. Disposable e-juice cartridges, called JUUL pods, are inserted into the end of the device to produce the vapor, which can come in four different flavors. According to JUUL's website, each JUUL pod

"We have to accept that when we use e-cigarettes, we are essentially being guinea pigs."

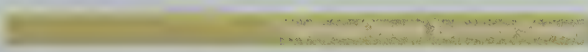
-Ari Kirshenbaum, professor of psychology



In 2016, 23.8% of adults aged 18-24 reported using a vaporizer.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

In 2011, 1.5% of high schoolers reported using vaporizers. By 2015, 16% of high schoolers reported vape usage.



In 2016, 20% of high school students reported using tobacco products; of these students, 11.3% reported using vaporizers, while 8% reported smoking cigarettes.

National Youth Tobacco Survey

In 2016, 4.3% of middle school students reported using vaporizers.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

INFOGRAPHIC BY LIAM RADEMACHER

is equivalent in nicotine to 1 pack of cigarettes, or 200 puffs. When the JUUL pod empties, one simply has to pop another back in, and can throw out the previous pod.

"I started smoking cigarettes when I was 15," said Elena Lloyd '19, an education major. "Then I came to college and I'd go through a pack every two days." As her college career continued, opportunities arose in Lloyd's life where she wasn't allowed to have the smell of cigarettes lingering on her. She began working at a preschool in an environment where she did not want to expose children to any lasting scent of smoke. Lloyd was able to kick her habit for a few weeks until she returned to school this fall, where she began smoking again. With the continuation of her smoking routine, Lloyd was becoming concerned about her health, the possible lingering smell, and the cost.

In a move to mitigate those concerns, Lloyd decided to invest in a JUUL, citing the discreet odor and health benefits as reasons. "Now with a JUUL, I don't have to smell like cigarettes and I don't have to smoke butts. It's good for my health and my professional appearance."

Kirshenbaum notes that while vaporizers and other e-cigarettes beat out other tobacco products in terms of health, there are not enough conclusive studies to call them a riskless product.

"If we had to guess, vaporizers are going to be much safer than combustible tobacco products, but they're not riskless," Kirshenbaum said. "We have to accept that when we use e-cigarettes, we are essentially being guinea pigs because very little is known about them, and there is a lot of variability in the product itself."

With so many e-cigarettes products on the market, cheaply-produced vapes have been found to produce amount of aldehyde and other toxins, and because many e-juices contain nicotine, the risk of addiction still runs strong through vaporizer use and nicotine withdrawal is a reality.

"When we look at the symptoms of nicotine withdrawal, they include psychological variables — things like depression, anxiety, irritability — and I would want people to know that when they pick up an e-cigarette, odds are pretty good that they can become dependent upon it, and they'll end up having the symptoms."

One of the reasons Dunn chose the JUUL brand specifically is because of its high nicotine content. "A JUUL pod is 50 milligrams of nicotine, whereas I normally used to vape around three milligrams. E-juices typically range from three, six, 12 milligrams." Once JUUL hit the market, competitors began coming out with higher nicotine-concentrated e-juices. Dunn often manually refills his JUUL pods with JUUL e-juice and other high nicotine juices rather than purchasing more pods in order to cut back on some of the cost.

Dunn said he recognizes that the higher concentration of nicotine makes JUUL and similar products extremely addicting, and wouldn't recommend JUULs or other potent vapes for everyone.

"If you smoke a lot of cigarettes, I would say go for it, otherwise you're just going to get addicted to nicotine." ●

All of their efforts go to waste: exploring the challenges of being trash free



PHOTO BY AUDREY SINCLAIR

Claire Scherf '20 saved her waste from Monday morning through Friday evening. Her waste totaled 25 pieces.

By Audrey Sinclair
Managing Editor

Last year, when I saw the eye-popping image online of a person who's managed to fit their whole year's worth of trash in one single jar, it sparked something in me. It seemed almost unreal. While very few, if any, of us may ever eliminate all of our waste, like the zero waste bloggers grinning to the camera about how they've managed to remove all disposable items and other garbage from their lives, the movement is about much more than that. What is important is that we reassess how much waste we all produce and feel inspired to reduce that amount. I wanted to give it a try for myself, even if I just started small.

Americans produced roughly 258 million tons of waste in 2014, with 136 million tons ending up in a landfill, according to the EPA. That's almost four and a half pounds of trash, per person, per day. Think of all the uneaten or expired food you toss out,

how much packaging you discard to get to the items you purchased, and how many convenient single-use items like paper coffee cups or paper towels you throw in the trash when you're done with them. It all adds up when you multiply your personal waste by the number of days in a year and the millions of people who live in the country.

I thought instantly eliminating all of the waste from my lifestyle sounded too difficult, and I believe I'm right. It's not something I can do instantaneously. The key is to begin with small steps and build from there.

Understanding my impact

I consider myself a fairly environmentally friendly person. I always use my reusable water bottle, cringe every time I have to use a plastic bag at the store, and take the time to sort my recycling. To give myself a fuller understanding of my environmental awareness, I collected all of the waste I would have thrown in the trash or recycling from Monday morning to Friday

evening to understand how much I was disposing of.

Saving all of my waste opened my eyes to how much I, alone, contribute to our trash problem. In just five days, I filled up a trash bag with 131 items of waste including paper towels, candy and gum wrappers, instant meal packaging, postage, scrap papers, sanitizing wipes, paper plates, new product packaging, and the list goes on and on. I was shocked that I've been doing this without thinking for 21 years. The small experiment was a huge wake-up call.

Most of us don't have an entire lifestyle built around reducing waste in our daily lives. However, some people have lifelong experience with the idea.

"It's a constant thought," said Claire Scherf '20. "It's always been in my family. We've always kept all the paper from our mail and either recycled it or used it for our wood stove. We use canvas bags instead of paper or plastic. There's just always another thing you can achieve."

Scherf is an environmental studies major raised on a farm in Connecticut. She is interested in the zero waste lifestyle, but admits to being nowhere close to completely waste-free. "I'm just generally trying to cut back," she said. But her idea of generally cutting back is reducing her already small amount of waste.

Scherf describes her home in Connecticut as a closed system. "We try to keep the system in our house as closed as possible," she explained. "Things that we have, we try to use up as much as possible" to avoid getting new things and throwing things away. The amount of waste the family does end up bringing to the dump is roughly one trash bin to three recycling bins.

I asked Scherf to join me in the challenge and collect her waste for a week. With her years of experience

under her belt, she accumulated 25 pieces of waste, a sharp contrast from my 131. I was shocked and a little ashamed. Because she eats her meals in the dining hall, she didn't have to worry about personal food waste. However, she still had fewer plastics, packages, and paper towels than I did because she uses using cloth towels and reusable containers. She also firmly believes in buying only what she needs. I, on the other hand, tend to be more indulgent.

Food for thought

Food was approximately 21 percent of the waste that ended up in landfills in 2014. Scherf's family composts all of the food scraps they accumulate.

"We always compost," Scherf said. "When I go to other people's houses and there's no compost, it pains me to see people put food scraps in the garbage because that's not how I've ever done it."

Last year, St. Michael's College prioritized composting more than ever because of a Vermont state law that required any place that produced more than a half ton of food waste each week to compost their food. Under the guidelines of Act 148, Vermont should have no more food waste in its landfills by 2020. There are compost bins around campus and in residential areas. I compost all of the food waste I produce, which also keeps our kitchen trash can from getting as smelly.

Scherf's key to eliminating waste comes from a phrase we are all familiar with: reduce, reuse, recycle. She and her family try their hardest to only buy what they need to reduce the amount of things they go through. This is the first step to reducing waste. The next step is to reuse everything that you can. The last step is to recycle everything you can't reduce or reuse.

As the Director of Sustainability at St. Michael's College, Heather Lynch works with the school to encourage sustainable practices. November is "Waste Watchers Awareness month" on campus. One competition that is running through the first half of the month is to spotlight three "waste war-



PHOTO BY CORINNE HARVEY

Audrey Sinclair saved her waste that I would have put into a trash or recycling dumpster from Monday morning to Friday evening. It totaled 131 pieces.

ors" on campus who will in eco-friendly prizes to incentivise thinking critically about waste reduction. Another competition will take place just before Thanksgiving in the first year dormitories that will assess the trash, recycling, and compost habits and sorting skills of each floor. The prize is a pizza party for the floor — a sustainable one, with reusable plates and cups, of course — to encourage good habits for the first year students.

Lexie Alexopoulos, the student zero waste coordinator, also works in the office of sustainability to incorporate waste reducing programs into campus culture. Alexopoulos attempted to implement an eco-ware program at Einstein's that would allow the cafe to serve food in reusable containers, then later collect and wash them to use again.

"I was going to try to pitch that here," Alexopoulos said. "They have them at VM, where they wash the container for you. We don't have the infrastructure to clean the actual containers." Alexopoulos further explained that Einstein's cannot accept containers handed to them from customers over the counter because it violates USDA food safety code.

Ever since Alexopoulos' plan fell through, she's been trying to simply promote bringing a reusable mug to the cafe instead of using the provided single-use paper cups.

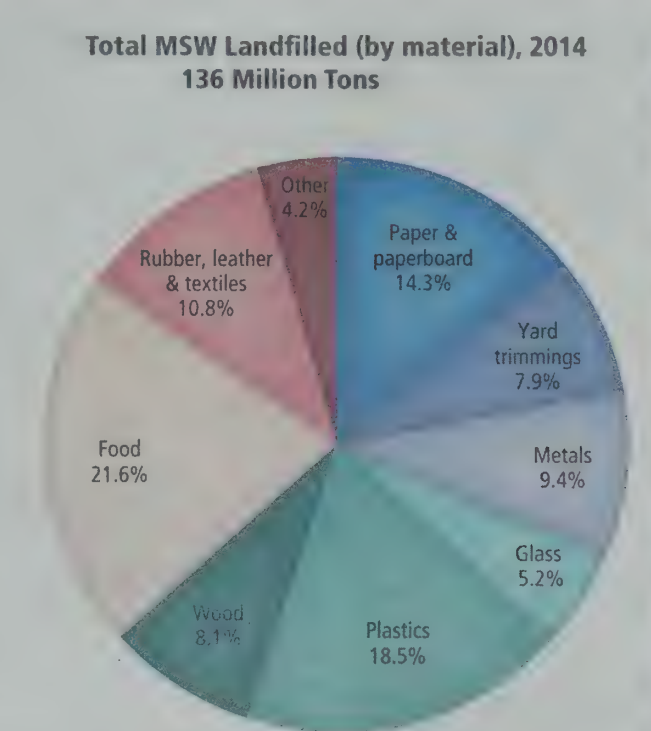
"Start with reusable coffee mugs and reusable water bottles," Lynch said. Every first year student gets a free mug. Things add up that people don't think about. There's no need for [disposables]."

Take the first step

While Lynch, Scherf, and Alexopoulos are all passionate about environmental awareness and reducing waste, each of them finds it takes effort.

To Scherf, the hardest part is remembering. When she's home, it's part of her natural family habit to keep their home a closed system. However, when she is at college, life is a little more complicated.

"I find at school it's harder because you're in



GRAPH COURTESY OF EPA.GOV

In 2014, the total municipal solid waste (MSW) landfilled in our country totaled 136 million tons.

a different environment," Scherf said. "I'm definitely less conscious about it here just cause other things are on my mind."

Alexopoulos thinks the hardest part about being truly waste free on campus comes from eating at the dining hall. Lots of waste gets produced behind the scenes in the kitchen and every step leading to it.

"Most of the waste you generate is from your food," Alexopoulos said. "Participating in the dining service makes it pretty difficult to actually even understand how much waste you are generating."

If you prepare your own food, a way to eliminate food packaging waste is to buy bulk. Grocery stores, such as City Market, offer food and supplies in bulk bins. Customers are encouraged to bring their own clean, reusable containers to fill up with product. They can also use paper or plastic bags supplied by the Market or buy reusable jars at the store.

A good starting point to reducing waste is understanding how much you throw away. Often, once our garbage is conveniently out of sight, it's out of mind. Over the summer, Scherf abstained from using any communal or public trash cans and instead kept all of her trash in her own bags.

"It actually changes

your mindset," Scherf said. "Instead of just tossing it, you're actually putting it somewhere and looking at it. It could even just be a day. You're seeing what you're actually throwing away in a bag and being like, 'Oh, what could I have used this for?'"

While changing habits takes effort, the decision is empowering, Lynch said.

"In a world when you feel like you can't control [everything] that's going on, you can control this entirely," said Lynch. "We have complete control over what we're consuming and how we're disposing of it. It's very empowering."

I find my reusable water bottle to be one of the most empowering items I own. Each time I refill it, I use the couple seconds to reflect on how I have saved one more plastic bottle from the landfill. Recently, I acquired a reusable metal straw. When I use it, I feel the power of my choice to save a plastic straw from ending up in the trash. These small steps make a tangible difference.

Collecting my trash for five days opened my eyes to how much I contribute to landfills. Even though I am just one person, I know that changing my habits will make a tangible difference. It just starts with one small goal. ●

Tips to eliminate waste

It's easiest to make lifestyle changes in small, manageable steps. Here's some suggestions to reduce your waste.

Divest from disposables: Replace the single use items, like paper coffee cups and napkins, with reusable items like a to-go mug or a cloth napkin.

Shop from thrift stores: Not only are items generally inexpensive, but they don't come in packaging and you're saving things from ending up in a landfill.

Compost: Food was one fifth of all landfilled material in 2014. Start the habit here by using the provided bins around campus.

REDUCE your product intake. You won't throw it away later, and you avoid contributing to all of the waste that was made in creating the product.

REUSE what you can and invest in reusable items.

RECYCLE what you can to avoid it ending up in a landfill and choose recyclable products over ones that aren't.

Consider carrying a kit: In your purse or backpack, stow a reusable utensil, reusable straw, and cloth napkin in a reusable container. Keep a reusable water bottle with you, and if you're going out for a coffee, bring your own mug. Cafes often offer discounts for saving them the paper cup.

Purchase in bulk. Bulk stores, like City Market, allow you to fill up your own bags or jars and charge by the weight of the product. Be sure to use a reusable container instead of a single-use bag.

Try it yourself

A good starting point to reducing waste is understanding how much you throw away. Often, once our garbage is conveniently out of sight, it's out of mind. Over the summer, Scherf abstained from using any communal or public trash cans and instead kept all of her trash in her own bags.

"It actually changes your mindset," Scherf says. "Instead of just tossing it, you're actually putting it somewhere and looking at it. It could even just be a day."

Try to put all of your waste into one trash can or bag for as little as a day or a week.

"You're seeing what you're actually throwing away in a bag and being like, 'Oh, what could I have used this for?'"



Osrica McLean '18, has measured coyote skulls this year as part of a research project.

PHOTO BY EVA WILTON

Student examines coyote skulls

By Lance Reynolds

Environment & Science Editor

Osrica McLean '18 takes a coyote skull out of a bin that holds her research collection. As she tries to separate the coyote's jaw from the rest of the skull, other parts start to fall apart. McLean knows exactly why she couldn't continue measuring the skull — it was too old and too fragile.

The senior biology and economics double major has spent more than 100 hours since August examining and measuring around 95 coyote skulls from around the country to wrap up a five-year research project under the supervision of Declan McCabe, chair of the biology department.

"It came kind of naturally," McLean said with a chuckle when explaining what it first felt like to hold a coyote skull. "There was this weird hairy one they didn't really clean well, so that was weird and kind of gross."

The purpose of the project is to show the geographical variation across the country within coyotes. McCabe and McLean have learned through the research that New England coyote skulls are much larger than skulls from other regions in America.

There are two hypotheses for why New England coyote skulls are larger than other regions, according to McCabe. One is that the New England coyote population hybridizes with wolves meaning that they have a good chunk of wolf DNA. For example, New England coyotes have larger and more

powerful jaws. The second is that when coyotes migrated into the northeast in the early 1900s, there were no wolves, so coyotes had a lot more freedom to hunt for larger prey.

Reviewers at *Northeast Naturalist*, a journal focusing on the biological and

ecological aspects of Northeast environments and organisms, assumed that since New England coyote skulls were larger than skulls of coyotes from other regions of the country, they must have been older in age. However, McLean has proven otherwise through the study of the skull's sutures.

Reviewers at *Northeast Naturalist*, a journal focusing on the biological and ecological aspects of Northeast environments and organisms, assumed that since New England coyote skulls were larger than skulls of coyotes from other regions of the country, they must have been older in age. However, McLean has proven otherwise through the study of the skull's sutures.

"You'd expect the younger skulls would have open sutures underneath their skulls and as they grow older, they'd close up," McLean said.

"We discovered that the animals are not actually older in the northeast — they are about the same age as the ones out west," McCabe said.

McCabe has sent research to *Northeast Naturalist* in the past but it failed to result in publication, as the journal wanted a more accurate measurement length of the skulls instead of the most varied measurement length — from the front of the skull to the back.

McLean said she has measured a more accurate and reliable measurement — from the anterior of the skull on the premaxillary bone (above the inci-

sors) to the occipital condyles at the posterior of the skull.

"Whatever I've learned on skulls, I've really learned on this project," McCabe said. "I'm certainly learning new stuff, and Osrica is teaching me new stuff."

McCabe bought his first coyote skull in 2012 from a student for 30 dollars and since then, he and three stu-

dents, including McLean, have studied over 100 different coyote skulls from around the country, which McCabe has primarily bought off Ebay.

"The original intent was for us to have a teaching resource so students could measure the skulls," McCabe

her current job at Boston Children's Hospital.

"[The] most important piece I took away is research technique, a huge impact that reflected across my academics course after course, through senior seminar, and in my current position as a clinical research assistant at Boston Children's Hospital," Vu said in an email.

Not only has the project helped reveal important facts about coyotes, it has also showed the importance of digital archives.

Since McCabe began accumulating skulls, he and his students have created a digital library where 120 archives are stored of the different skulls they have studied. The archives help McLean make the most accurate measurements of the skulls as possible. McCabe said that it's the biggest digital library of coyote skulls currently on the internet.

"There are other archives, but the archives of skulls typically show you one specimen of every species they can get," McCabe said.

"It's important because Professor McCabe is trying to show that you can use digital archives to do accurate research," McLean said, "and it would make it more readily available for researchers out there."

Although the project has been conducted as a means for further understanding on coyotes and digital archives, there are many different ways the research results can be used.

"I can see this data being carried out with other aim," Vu said. "To me, I think that's the power of this coyote skull data set: it's dense and wide enough to support many research foci."

In the coming weeks, McCabe hopes the research over the past five years will result in a successful publication in *Northeast Naturalist*.

McLean ultimately wants to go to dental school after she graduates in May, and although the project doesn't directly relate to dentistry, she recognizes the project's value.

"Without it, I wouldn't have done any research experience in college," McLean said. "This was a really great opportunity, and with it being my last year here at St. Mike's to be able to [have] a research opportunity was something I wanted to do." ●

-Catherine Vu '15

said. "I had such a good collection that I turned it into a research project."

Catherine Vu '15, studied coyote skulls throughout her undergraduate days at St Michael's and was one of two students who helped McCabe start the project during the 2011-2012 academic school year.

Vu said that the research ultimately helped pave the path to her landing

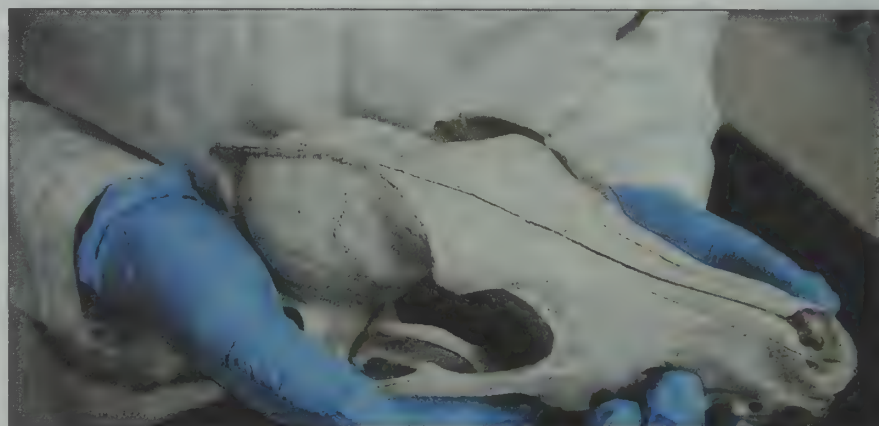


PHOTO BY EVA WILTON

Osrica McLean '18, holds one of the many coyote skulls that she has studied as part of a research project under the supervision of Declan McCabe, professor of biology.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN COLLIER

The main wall of Brian Collier's exhibition, *Unlawning America: A Call to Inaction*, as seen at Shelburne Farms.

Unlawning America, one yard at a time

By Corinne Harvey
News Editor

Driving through any suburban neighborhood, one typically expects to see two cars in the driveway, a white picket fence and a perfectly manicured lawn. To keep up this appearance, mowing has to be done each week or the neighbors will begin to complain. But in his latest project, *Unlawning America: A Call to Inaction*, Brian Collier, associate professor of fine arts at Saint Michael's College, is urging us to think differently about what will happen if we just let things be; starting with our own backyards.

For the past 10 years Collier has been looking at places that have had a lot of human intervention and disruption of habitats. "I became interested in looking at the lawn, arguably one of the main ways we manage green space. It's also widely known, based on scientific research, that it's extremely harmful to the environment in a lot of different ways," Collier said. He wanted to come up with a project that spreads the idea that it's not that hard to live an environmentally friendly life, while acknowledging it isn't easy to make changes in our day to day behaviour.

"From an art perspective, I'm trying to make a convincing argument that will get people to stand back and very sincerely ask the question how much lawn do we need," Collier said. Through photography and video exhibitions and talks, he is trying to get as many people on board as possible.

To begin this process he wants us to, "Look at the places that we mow and ask how often we use it, if we use it at

all. If we only mow it when we use it, maybe we don't need to do that anymore. It's tied into an old way of living that doesn't fit into how our world works anymore."

For example, in his own yard he has reduced the lawn space by 60 to 70 percent over the course of four years. "People need to be led into understanding what is going on with these changes," he explains. It is a new way of looking how our world works. He advises starting out by mowing

a small patch of grass near the sidewalk, letting the rest grow naturally, and then put up official looking signs announcing it to be a pollinator habitat. This gives a purpose for a "messy" looking lawn.

When we let our green spaces go natural, we aren't giving up very much, and it actually benefits the environment and saves resources. From pollinators to birds populations, by ceasing to intervene in habitats we encourage the growth of insect friendly

spaces.

Collier hopes to influence a global movement, one lawn at a time, transforming the 40 million acres of lawns in the United States to encourage healthier ecosystems overall. He said that this project will be the focus of his work for the foreseeable future. ●



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALESSANDRO BERTONI

Brian Collier installing the exhibition at Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, on Monday, Oct. 16.

NETFLIX**CONTINUED FROM A1**

My father was a military officer and my mother was a housewife and domestic engineer and so our lives were very privileged. I grew up with three brothers and three sisters and was able to go to school six days a week studying Chinese, Cambodian, French, and English, and on the day off we went to movie theaters, concerts, temples. So our lives weren't very different from the lives of other children around the world, but that came to an end on April 17, 1975 when the Khmer Regime took over the country.

Q: You and your family were forced to flee from your home in Phnom Penh and were forced to separate. How did life change for you as an 7-year-old?

Phnom Penh was populated by over 2 million people, and we were all forced to flee from our homes. The entire city was evacuated within 72 hours. All the cities in Cambodia were evacuated and people were told to pack up as little as we could, pots and pans and clothes, and whatever belongings we could carry, and move into the countryside.

So the next almost four years we were forced to live our lives like that of kids in labor camps where everyday was a Monday and every Monday was a work day and it didn't matter if you were 6 or 60. You would dig trenches and grew food to support a war you didn't want, didn't know about, didn't vote for and you had no say whatsoever on it.

In the meantime, all the food went to support soldiers fighting a war we didn't want, that meant that the citi-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX

Cambodian actress Sareum Srey Moch as a young Loung Ung in the Netflix original movie First They Killed My Father.

these people executed, and then they crushed the enemies by threatening their families.

We moved from one village to another always trying to stay safe and invisible, and by the end of the regime, it had claimed the lives of both my parents and two of my sisters.

Q: When were you able to come to the United States?

My siblings and I were reunited when the genocide finally ended. With my oldest brother Ming and his wife, we left Cambodia in 1980 and emigrated to America, to Vermont of all places. We knew nothing about America at the time, this was before the internet and instagrams and instant messag-



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUNG UNG

Loung Ung with Sareum Srey Moch on the set of the film in Cambodia.

"I actually started writing the first draft of my book as a series of journal entries and articles when I was a student at St. Michael's College."

-Loung Ung

zens were going hungry and those who did not agree with the philosophy of the Khmer Rouge, which was that we were gonna build Cambodia and kick out all the foreigners and be master of our own domain per se, were enemies of the state. And how they dealt with enemies of the state was they purged them, or crushed them. Purging them, meant they sent soldiers out into the countryside and into the villages and one by one rounded up the fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers who could speak out and they had

ings, so we had no visuals of Vermont or America. The few times I had seen pictures of America was when the refugee workers would show films in the camps in Thailand, where plotlines often took place in big cities like Chicago or New York, and people are very diverse with different ethnicities, and hair colors, and rollerskating in big cities, and then we arrived in Vermont. [Laughs].

It was June of 1980 and we were so cold. Needless to say I don't think I

ever warmed up while in Vermont, but we loved Vermont and it was a great place to grow up. I loved the people, I loved Church Street, I loved Ben and Jerry's, I loved the community of Vermont and that's something I missed growing up in Asia.

Q: In 2000, you wrote a memoir about your experience which has just been adapted into a film on Netflix. When were you first approached about turning it into a film?

I actually started writing the first draft of my book as a series of journal entries and articles when I was a student at St. Michael's College. When it came out in 2006, I was working in Cambodia for Veterans International, an NGO that produces artificial legs, and limbs, and wheelchairs for victims

of war. At the same time this actress Angelina Jolie, who hopefully some of your readers will know who she is, was filming a movie called Tomb Raider in Cambodia. She happened to pick up a \$2 copy of my book while there, read it, called me up and we became friends. Ever since then, through the years we've had conversations about turning First They Killed My Father into a movie.

Q: Did Jolie need to persuade you to turn the book into a movie?

As the writer, I was happy to have my book as a book, ...and I always thought that if it were to be turned into a movie, it was going to be done with the right people, the right team, the right intention and the right partner,

or else it was not going to be done at all. So when Angie called me up a few years ago and was like "Let's do it! I was thrilled because she and Rithy Panh the producer in Cambodia were my dream team.

It was also very heartbreaking. I was in Cambodia for the five month long shoot, I was on the set every day, and it is very heartbreaking and very redemptive to be on a set with sometimes hundreds and sometimes thousands of people whom you knew were either survivors themselves or were related to or were sons and daughters of people who survived the genocide. So I knew I was not alone. When your heart breaks, there was always someone there with you who had their heart broken as well and could be there to pick you up.

Q: This movie was shot entirely in Cambodia, and is the largest project ever filmed there. Did you insist on filming in Cambodia?

I wanted it to be shot in Cambodia and to be shot in my language and it just so happens that the director is one of my best friends in the world [laughs], and we talked about this, and she agreed.

of taking everything out and trusting your collaborators to be part of the process and bring everything to life.

Q: Were you part of the casting process at all especially for the casting of a young you?

That was the one area of the process that I chose not to be involved. I just couldn't do it. Could you imagine? Everything you do in life, you put a stamp or an imprint of who you are, and I just thought that it would be too emotional to cast people to play my siblings or myself. Myself might have been alright but it would have been too difficult to cast my parents and in some way, I just didn't want to betray them and betray their spirits. I just felt like they are who they are and they will always be who they are to me, and to look for those qualities in actors just felt a little too strange.

Q: Were parts of the movie hard for you to watch?

Going into it I thought it was going to be the bombings and the horrors, and the wars, and I was prepared for those. What I was not prepared for, were the moments of beauty and joy, and they were going to make it so I

bodians it is something that will make them feel honored, and never forgotten. The people of Cambodia have never forgotten the hardships and they've never forgotten the love or the family or the sacrifice or the grace. So for me I also hope that people not only remember the horrors of war and genocide, but also the beauty and the strength of Cambodia as a nation.

*Loung Ung's film **First They Killed My Father** is available for streaming on Netflix. Since the film's release, Ung has been keeping busy running several restaurants and microbreweries in Cleveland with her husband, while also working on a new novel. At the close of our conversation, Ung mentioned how she still has much love for the college "It not only is a place where you can meet like minded people, but it also fosters your faith and belief in principles of social justice and making a difference in our world."* ●



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUNG UNG
Loung Ung while working in Cambodia.

"What I was not prepared for were the moments of beauty and joy, and they were going to make it so I couldn't sleep at night."

-Loung Ung

Angie and I co-wrote the screenplay together, so conversation was really easy because whenever I had thoughts or questions all I had to do was walk over to her room. However I think we were all really grateful to be able to shoot in Cambodia because in addition to making a wonderful film, we were able to connect with the land, to the people, to the nation, and we found it to be a wonderful experience.

Q: Was it difficult to adapt your book into a screenplay?

When you're writing a book, you are describing everything including your five senses, your thoughts, your intuition, your faith, but when you write a screenplay you need to tone everything down. You need to allow the cinematographer to put his stamp on the project, and give the actors, and the composers freedom as well. So writing a book is being able to put everything in, and to take the story and bring it to life. Writing a screenplay is the process

couldn't sleep. Starting from the opening scene, where you have the family gathering for dinner, for me it was like my family came back to life for the last time. I don't have images of them, and the last time my family was able to sit down together for dinner, since then our family has been shattered and broken. To see that was just shattering and heartbreaking and it made me miss them that much more.

Q: The movie ends with the line, "A daughter of Cambodia remembers, so the world will never forget." Do you think that this is an event in history that has been forgotten by the world?

Most definitely. During the Vietnam war, journalists wrote about the war in Vietnam like it was the main event and Cambodia was often written about and spoken about like a slide show. I think very few people knew what happened in Cambodia So I hope that for the rest of the audience it is something that they will remember, and for the Cam-



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUNG UNG
Loung Ung (right) with Angelina Jolie in Cambodia in 2001.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NETFLIX
A still from the film, showing the Khmer Rouge regime invading Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia.

Thor: Ragnarok review, a thunderous success



By Jack Martin
International Editor

The term "Superhero movie" does not do Thor: Ragnarok, the new movie released earlier this month and the newest offering from the ever expanding Marvel Cinematic Universe, enough justice. Ragnarok is not your average cape and tights film, but a bold, epic, and absurdly hilarious spectacle that stands tall as the most one of a kind blockbuster of 2017.

The film picks up after the events of Avengers: Age of Ultron, reintroducing us to the superhero Thor, the Norse god of thunder (played by Chris Hemsworth), who has been traveling across outer space attempting to prevent Ragnarok, the prophesied end of days for the gods of his home city of Asgard. However, he is quickly forced to face a new threat from Hela the goddess of death (Cate Blanchett), who has escaped from millennia of imprisonment in the underworld and is now bent on conquering Asgard and the rest of the nine realms of the universe.

During their first battle, Hela beats Thor and banishes him to a planet where he is enslaved by the mighty Grandmaster (brought to life spectacularly by the one and only Jeff Goldblum) and forced to fight in gladiator battles for the amusement of the population. Now Thor must team up with his trickster brother Loki (Tom Hiddleston), Valkyrie (Tessa Thompson), a hard drinking former warrior of Asgard, and his old ally the Incredible Hulk (played with motion capture by Mark Ruffalo) to escape the planet and stop Hela before she destroys every-



GRAPHICS COURTESY OF THE NOUN PROJECT

thing.

If the plot of this movie sounds insane, that is because it is, unapologetically so. Clearly inspired by the success both Guardians of the Galaxy movies were by embracing the wackiness of

and a fight between gods for the fate of a mythical golden city. It is a testament to director Taika Waititi (who up until now, had only directed low budget indie films), that the movie does not fall apart under its ambition, but

Chris Hemsworth is a standout. His Thor finally allowed him to shake off his stoic Shakespearean persona and be more lighthearted and goofy.

this universe, Thor: Ragnarok, goes all in on delivering a wild spectacle with alien gladiator fights, spaceship battles,

instead actually gets better the more it leans into its inherent silliness. The plot of the film races along at breakneck

speed, as though eager to show you all its fancy toys, however it never feels rushed, striking a nice balance of big budget action sequences with smaller character moments.

The humor of the film is without a doubt its strongest element. It is stuffed with quirky and cleverly written jokes which are set up in rapid succession and delivered flawlessly by a pitch perfect cast all of whom are bringing their A-game. Chris Hemsworth is a standout. His Thor has finally allowed to shake off his stoic Shakespearean persona and be more lighthearted and goofy. Thor still is the same heroic character from the previous films, but he is a bit more cocky, and a bit more of a lug head, allowing Hemsworth to showcase his mastery of physical comedy, timing and delivery.

Meanwhile, two-time Academy Award winner Cate Blanchett gives Hela gravitas with a sinister and merciless presence and gives this powerful film an equally powerful villain. Yet ultimately Jeff Goldblum steals the show as the Grandmaster fully embracing that quintessential Jeff Goldblumness that has made him a cult figure (according to press interviews, the director encouraged Goldblum to engage in improv on set in order to make the role even more like himself which he clearly relished).

Ragnarok feels like the kind of film that appears rarely, a big budget tentpole movie that is trying to deliver something audiences have never seen before. With a story that never feels like it's playing it safe, a director with a unique vision, and the budget that can bring whatever insane visual asked for, Ragnarok is setting our expectations high for the one that comes next. ●



MARVEL STUDIOS

THOR RAGNAROK



smc_defender

98 posts 490 followers 618 following

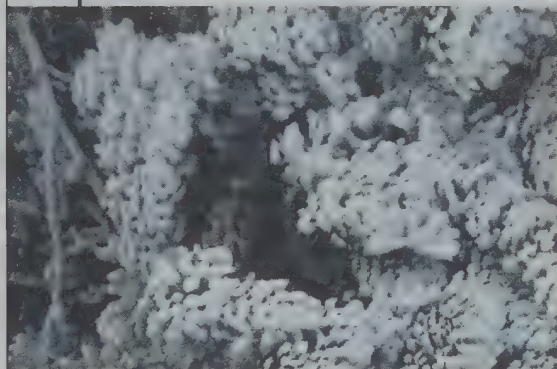
The Defender SMC students prepare for the winter months

sammy_mitro



sammy_mitro Friendly faces

samprue



samprue Still thinking about all the beautiful frost from this past weekend

edurette



edurette Gals of Sugarbush '17

bfidler6



bfidler6 Ready for winter

j0rd06



j0rd06 "May your dreams be larger than mountains and may you have the courage to scale their summits" -Harley King

styxandstones



styxandstones

How to curb climate change: It starts with you

Looking at the global warming situation as one miniscule individual can be daunting, especially when in recent months we've been seeing more intense hurricanes and wildfires along with warmer than usual temperatures. Eventually the realization hits that no matter how much you try to be nicer to the earth, your efforts still feel like a miniscule drop in a dirty ocean.

Trying to reduce, reuse and recycle is how most of us are taught to be nicer to the earth, but we are not born knowing every way we can apply these practices to our lives and use them to be kinder to the earth. This is where working individually to be kind to the earth poses a problem.

Instead, we should aim to learn and inform when it comes to being kinder to the earth. By learning from scientific articles on climate change or learning from a friend a new way to reduce, reuse or recycle, our individual impact becomes larger in the dirty ocean of climate change. And, informing others about what we know allows the other person to make changes to their lives and to inform even more people.

If more and more people learn and

inform, that's when the clean drops add up and change starts to occur.

Of course, this does not mean that everyone must go completely zero waste, a trash-conscious lifestyle documented on pg 12, or to shame others about not being as kind to the earth as you yourself are. Places like hospitals or people with medical conditions sacrifice reusing for the sake of human health. The ultimate goal with the learn and inform method is to learn what you can, do what you are able to do, and help people do whatever they are respectively able to do.

This method also extends to informing your local and national politicians about what they can do. My hometown bans stores from using plastic bags and encourages them to use paper bags instead. Washington D.C. charges 5 cents per plastic bag, a small fee that may discourage people from taking bags they don't need and use reusable bags instead.

If you are interested in learning and informing, remember that, as a member of the St. Michael's College community, you have access to an ever-expanding library and professors who are very knowledgeable in climate change and efforts to curb it.

And if you are a student, consider taking environmental classes, such as BI-110 Effects of Climate Change or an Environmental Studies class.

But no matter if you or your politicians believe climate change is real or not, try to reduce, reuse, recycle, learn and inform. The worst outcome here is that the world aims to become a cleaner place. ●

ANGELA MCPARLAND
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Email eodonnell2@mail.smcvt.edu and
amcparland@mail.smcvt.edu for information on the contribution process.



Letter to the editor: Education on the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Dear Editor,

We, the Student Global AIDS Campaign (SGAC) Chapter of St. Michael's College, are writing to you as concerned members of society to address and raise awareness about a current health crisis many may not be aware of. We are, of course, referring to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. When most people think of this epidemic, they think of it as an event of the past. However, HIV/AIDS continues to devastate populations across the globe, especially those that are impoverished and stigmatized.

In 2015, there were two million new HIV infections and over one million people died of AIDS. Currently, only 19 million of the 37 million infected are receiving life-saving treatment. This is not enough. This means 18 million people are still without treatment. This is especially infuriating because we have the means and technology to completely eradicate AIDS by 2030. To do this, we need more action and political will on the part of our congressmen and congresswomen.

This year's funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a global assistance program, was flat funded, and before that, was facing dire budget cuts. Thankfully, our nation's political leaders advocated for flat funding. But again, this is

not enough. To reach our goal of ending AIDS by 2030, we need to increase the PEPFAR annual budget by \$1 billion by fiscal year 2019. Of course, this number seems like an unattainable goal, but if we succeed in increasing funding, we will see millions of lives improved and saved, and AIDS will truly become an issue of the past.

Our chapter would like to encourage the members of our campus to educate themselves about this devastating issue and to contribute their voices to our cause. World AIDS Day (December 1) is a great opportunity to do this. Our chapter at Saint Michael's College is planning a variety events for the week of November 27-December 1 and we would love to see our campus unite and bring more attention and action to this issue. For more information contact: mperry2@mail.smcvt.edu.

Sincerely,
St. Michael's College SGAC Chapter

ERIN WILLIAMS, '19
STUDENT GLOBAL AIDS
CAMPAIGN MEMBER

Witnessing heart-break at the game

I knew going into the St. Michael's versus UVM men's basketball exhibition game that some of the St. Michael's team was going to kneel, and I anticipated a reaction from it, but was not prepared for what happened as the crowd began to realize players were kneeling.

The game was being dedicated to first responders, specifically those who helped save a building at UVM from a fire. After they acknowledged all the groups that helped in the efforts, the teams began to take their place for the National Anthem. I watched as the first players began to kneel and for a second, I thought there would be no reaction, until I heard the first women yell from the other side of the gym, "Stand up!" That was then followed by a wave of booing and yells from all corners of the gym.

It was mostly adults yelling when I think about it. I was mostly surrounded by what seemed to be UVM students and heard nothing from them. However, one man a few rows in front of me even yelled, "That's Un-American!"

I did notice that after the anthem, the St. Michael's team took to their bench without waiting for ROTC to walk off the court. I don't know if that was intentional or just being overcome with the emotions in the room, but I do wish they had waited.

As I tried in the past few days to explain what happened to my friends and peers, I realized I couldn't find words to truly explain how heartbreaking it was. I was glad to know that there was a video of what happened, but when I watched it, I realized that people were clapping for them. I don't even remember the clapping, all I heard were the boos and yells.

Everyone believes what they want, but is yelling and screaming at young men, right? I honestly wish the rest of the St. Michael's team fell on their knees, as well as the UVM team. Maybe not even for the specific reasons for kneeling during the anthem, but to show that they, literally, cannot stand to see their players being put down like that.

SHANNON WILSON, '19

MISSION STATEMENT

We, the voice of St. Michael's College, strive to create high quality journalism collected on a foundation of integrity. We represent the pulse of our campus by facilitating a forum for informative, enlightening and thought-provoking conversation. Through in-depth reporting, accurate storytelling and exceptional visuals, The Defender aims to professionally and ethically deliver the truth to our diverse audience.

Valuing a family Thanksgiving among consumerism

By Eva Wilton

Photography & Politics Editor

November 23 marks the American holiday that acknowledges gratitude. Are Americans losing sight of Thanksgiving's significance by overindulging on Black Friday and Cyber Monday? It begs the question what is the real meaning of Thanksgiving. Does the holiday serve as an opportunity to promote American consumerism?

Urban Dictionary defines Black Friday as "the day after Thanksgiving where thousands of Americans forget the spirit of the holiday season by trampling people and buying stupid gifts."

Saturday Night Live's Black Friday skit idolized a fake TV commercial that advertised 'never before seen' Black Friday deals. A light hearted interpretation of luring consumers into the store addresses a larger issue of more than the Black Friday frenzy. Ultimately, the issue of the crisis of American Consumerism plays a role.

Do not forget that the shopping does not end on Black Friday. The markdown deals continue until Cyber Monday. According to Forbes, the 2017 Cyber Monday prediction is that this year will surpass last year's spending. In 2016, Cyber Monday earned its place in U.S. e-commerce history with an unprecedented \$3.45 billion in spending,

according to Forbes. The article cites that the three main competitors for Cyber Monday are Amazon, Walmart, and Target.

Another concern for Cyber Monday is the demographic being reached and which demographic is participating in this never-ending satisfaction for latest trends and shopping desires. People aged 13 to 35 years old seem to be less interested in Cyber Monday due to the fact that 75 percent of them opted out last Cyber Monday, Forbes stated. Cyber Monday was established in 2005, according to Forbes and created a buzz to excite online shoppers. Meanwhile, Black Friday was launched in 1952, according to Forbes. Both were generated to participate in the excitement for the Christmas season.

The Cyber Monday event is not considered to be nearly as bad as standing in a line for hours on Thanksgiving, but I disagree. I am appalled to witness Americans not valuing the meaning of the Thanksgiving holiday. I asked my friends their plans for Thanksgiving and they responded by saying they are excited to shop. At what point will our commercially driven society reach an end? Maybe there is no end to the consumerist nation? When will we encourage our fellow citizens to spend Thanksgiving with family and celebrate our blessings? ●

A year later

By Maddy Linden

Online Editor

On November 8, it will have been a full year since the presidential election results. A full year since our country was divided into red and blue states and Nasty Women vs. "Make America Great Again." This election divided and created tension between friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors. Everyone knows someone who voted for "the other" candidate, whoever that may be. Sometimes that might have changed people's perspectives of who they thought that person was. Whether your vote was for the candidate that condemned "sexual harassment and racism," or if it was for the candidate that was "hard to trust, and lacked character," we became divided.

Forty percent of Americans have experienced tension with family or friends over the 2016 presidential election according to a survey conducted by ABC News. And a full year later, tensions are still high. With the holiday season coming up, all I can think about is what will my family even talk about at Thanksgiving dinner this year?

Last year on Thanksgiving, I found

out the majority of my extended family voted for Trump in the election, and supported a lot of the things he campaigned with. At the end of the conversation, I found myself walking away angry, confused and upset, as I began texting my mom about the conversation that was had about Trump's sexual assault allegations, and racism in America. Tears swelled in my eyes. I never thought the people that I have known for my entire life saw social issues that I thought were so important so incredibly differently. We became divided.

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, my thoughts and feelings about the election have become a little less raw since last year. I am hoping to have educational and intellectual conversation with my family members about school, my post grad plans, how good the turkey is, and of course, Trump's presidency in the last 365 days. Some things for myself and others to keep in mind while having these conversations is to listen, let your objector finish speaking before you jump in with your point of view, and you can only hope they will respectfully do the same. And remember, the person you are talking to is someone you love and care about.

Candidates come and go, but family is forever. ●



ILLUSTRATION BY LIAM RADEMACHER

Throwback Thursday: Reflection on earlier days

By Maddy Linden
Online Editor



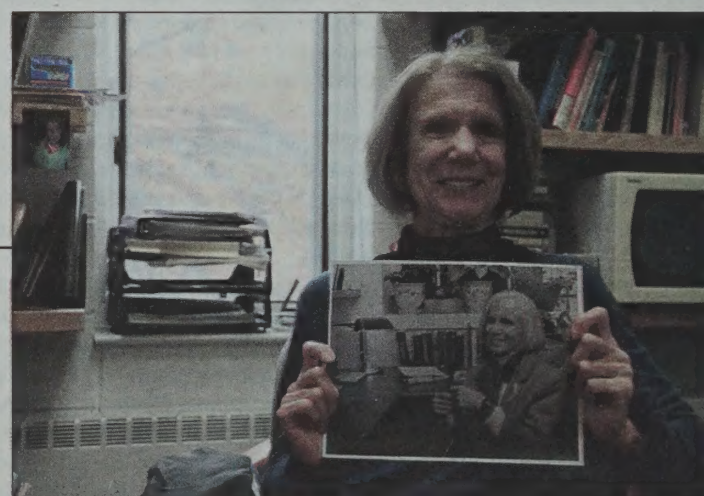
"This is from fall of 1982, and I was in a production that one of my professors didn't write, but adapted. I played this character called the draper and he was interested in selling people fabric for too much money and kind of all about himself...and I'm amazed by my eyebrows!"

-Peter Harrigan
Professor of Fine Arts



"This picture is from the fall of my sophomore year. I wanted to run cross country and there was no women's team, so I had to run on the men's team which actually worked alright I got a lot of races in, and when I could run in a race that had women I could compete as an independent from St. Mike's and if not I just ran as a team member on the men's team. In spite of Title 9 which had been in effect for a few years, we didn't yet have a women's team here. My senior year was kind of the beginnings of the women's varsity team. And then there were other young women who wanted to run. It was an interesting experience!"

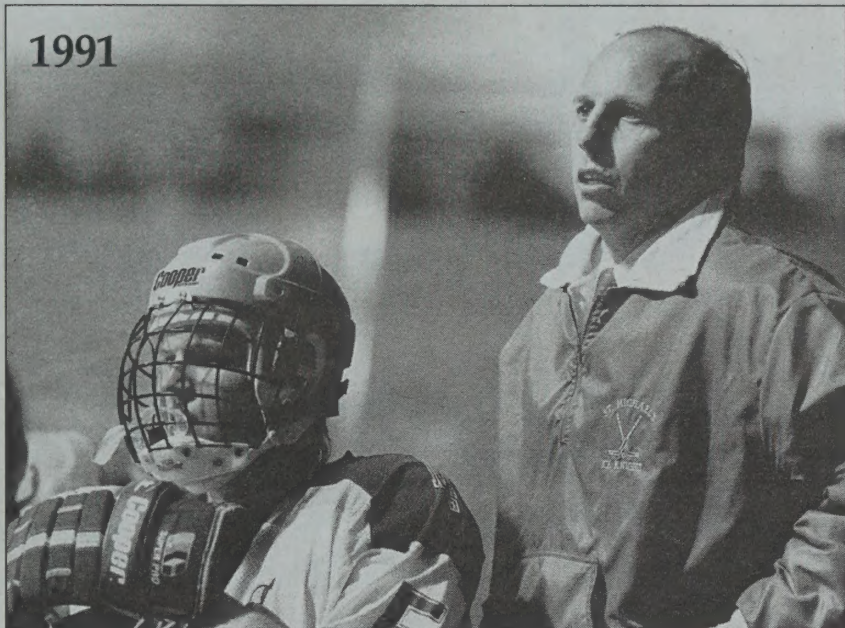
-Joan Wry
Associate Professor of English



"This was a growing time for St. Mike's, and I think that was exciting, rather than the cut backs we are seeing now. There were things being added and we were trying to figure out how we fit within all of those things. So it wasn't entirely different but certainly mental attitude about how you went about your day, what you were thinking, who you were interacting with. Everything was a possibility then and that was exciting."

-Sue Kuntz
Professor of Psychology

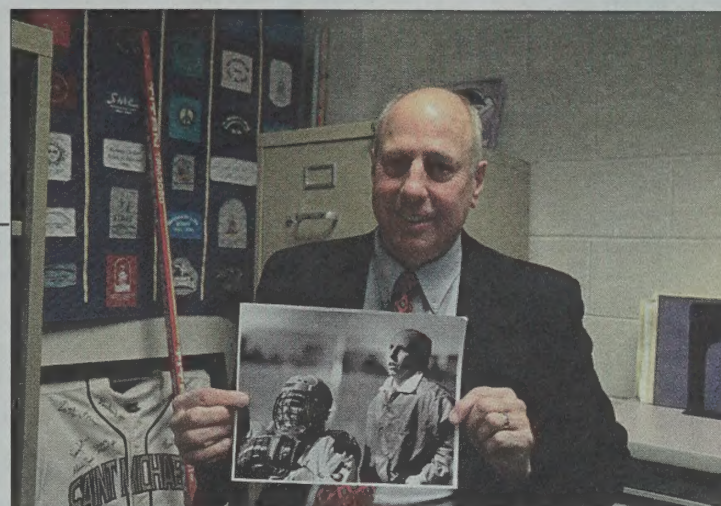
1991



"[The senior citizens prom] was a like *the* event, and the rugby team was a large portion of the volunteers, but it was always in the international commons where it took up a big chunk of time to set up. The folks that would come would be the ones that would come every year, so you really got to know them very well. There was a guy during my time there was like a 90 year old man from one of the local nursing homes from Ireland and he would always sing Danny Boy...I just remember a lot of laughter especially with MOVE things, there is so much laughter in those times. And that's still very true today."

-Heidi St. Peter

Assistant Director of Academic Support



"I'm kind of a guy that's in the moment. I'm most happy where I'm at. I've had a lot of people ask me back in the years what was my best team or which was my best residence life staff because I've had 37 years of residence life staffs and I have a hard time pin-pointing any of it. I'm just so grateful for Saint Michael's for my experience, for my family's experience and for the Catholic nature of St. Mike's. It's so important to me and my development as an individual."

-Lou Dimasi

Director of Residence Life

1995



"Students are very different, very different. I often joke, I have all the old exams I used to give, but if I gave the same exam now, students wouldn't be able to do them. And I say it with a little bit of sadness that most students wouldn't be able to do them even though I am the same person and the content is the same. Students also just didn't need to be entertained as much, they were content, a little bit more content than students today. It's just a generational shift too I think. There was no Canvas, none of that. So you would share an article either as a copy in class or you would say they are on reserve at the library. So what happened was the pace of interaction and expectations were different and therefore the way we all interacted was

different. There wasn't always this sort of heightened expectation and frenzy and I wonder, why do we have that?"

-Tara Natajaran

Professor and Chair of Economics

THIS FURNITURE IS FEMALE



By Deborah Katsuva
Contributing Writer

Her hair tied back in a French braid, wearing blue coveralls and protective glasses, Melanie Castillo '18 stood in the middle of a busy, littered, and dusty classroom on a late Monday night. She picked up a wooden box from the floor, put it on a flat table and ran her hands over it for a second before she started detailing and sanding the box. Castillo's box is an ottoman, which can be used as a table or a seat.

"I've always had an interest in furniture making and furniture in general, so when I saw the opportunity for the class I took it," Castillo said.

"This class is designed to be an introduction to heirloom quality woodworking," said Brian Collier, associate professor of fine arts who teaches Woodworking and Furniture Design. "That means a serious investigation of design issues, the ability to understand the properties of wood and how to source and select wood for a furniture project, learning how to make heirloom quality joinery and the basics of high-quality finishing techniques," Collier said.

While the class was open to all students, it consists of four women, all art majors, to whom professor Collier assigns a variety of projects: a small table, a box, and a seat that could be a bench or a stool. Earlier in the semester, the four women named themselves "The Founding Mothers of SMC Woodworking and Furniture Design," and got matching blue coveralls.

"I think it's interesting that we even say 'craftsmen' and we have four women doing 'craftsmen' jobs, building furniture by hand, and producing furniture product within an industry that is mostly man dominated, so there is an interesting dynamic there and we play with it a lot," Castillo said.

"I personally do not use the term craftsman; I prefer woodworker or furniture maker. I am constantly frustrated by the fact that people are surprised by there being only women in this particular course," Collier said, explaining that his teaching style would not have been affected by the presence of male students. "I did not set out intending for this course to have only women, but now I'm glad it does. These are highly dedicated and capable art students who are tackling everything I throw at them." ●



PHOTOS BY DEBORAH KATSUVA

Top: Four art majors, Melanie Castillo, Heaven Chartier, Katie Combs, Sophia Caravella (all '18), make up Woodworking and Furniture Design this semester. **Bottom** (left to right): Castillo in the workshop last week. Brian Collier teaches the introduction to heirloom quality woodworking. The students invested in matching blue coveralls after dubbing themselves "The Founding Mothers of SMC Woodwork and Furniture Design." Students learn the properties of wood, wood selection, and how to design and build high-quality joinery.